



Strategic Plan 2006-2011
**Economic Services
Administration**

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Purpose of This Document

This strategic plan communicates how we will advance our mission and goals in a changing environment and meet our future challenges, so that we can better serve vulnerable populations in Washington State. This document is a road map that guides the business policies and improvement strategies for our organization, employees and partners.

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Chapter 1 • Our Core Services



In SFY 2002, the Economic Services Administration served more than 883,000 people — representing 13.6% of all Washington State residents. Our core services focus on:

- **Poverty Reduction & Self-sufficiency** — Helping low-income people meet their basic needs and achieve economic independence through cash grants, food and medical assistance, employment-focused services, subsidized child care, and child support enforcement. Major programs include WorkFirst (Washington's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program), Basic Food (formerly the Food Stamp Program), General Assistance for the Unemployable, Refugee Assistance, and Working Connections Child Care.
- **Quality Child Care** — Protecting Washington's children from poor quality, unsafe child care through child care licensing and regulation, including health and safety standards for child care centers and family child care homes. As of June 2004, there were over 2,100 licensed child care centers and 6,500 family child care homes in Washington State.
- **Child Support Enforcement** — Ensuring parents live up to the responsibility of supporting their children and improving the self-sufficiency of families through increased financial and medical support. For many single-parent families, child support payments constitute an essential portion of their income and enhance their economic security. In SFY 2004, nearly \$634.2 million in child support (Title IV-D) for more than 419,000 children was collected in this state.

How We Are Organized

The Economic Services Administration represents more than 4,480 employees in six divisions working together to improve the lives of people in Washington State. Together we comprise one-quarter (25%) of the DSHS workforce.

The **Office of the Assistant Secretary** provides executive leadership and direction, and oversees human resource planning and analysis of performance data for the administration. Its State/Tribal Relations Unit (STRU) provides guidance and support to ESA staff on the development of policies and services to American Indians that affirm the Government-to-Government relationship between tribes and the state.

The **Community Services Division** (CSD) provides direct client services through a network of local Community Services Offices and Customer Service Call Centers across the state. People contact CSD for cash aid, food assistance, medical help, child care subsidies, and support services.

The **Division of Employment and Assistance Programs** (DEAP) is responsible for policy and programming related to benefits and services for low-income families and individuals, including the state's welfare-to-work program, WorkFirst, and the Basic Food Program.

The **Division of Child Support** (DCS) establishes and enforces financial and medical child support obligations, and provides paternity establishment services to families. Staff in 11 offices across the state provide child support services that assist in improving the well being of children, reducing poverty, and reducing the welfare caseload.

The **Division of Child Care and Early Learning** (DCCEL) manages several major child care subsidy programs, including the state's Working Connections Child Care Program, and the licensing and monitoring of over 8,500 child care facilities. The division also oversees the state's investment of federal and state funds to improve and expand access to child care and the availability of quality early childhood education and after school programs in Washington.

The **Information Technology Division** (ITD) provides technical support to meet the information processing needs of ESA, and oversees the planning and development of information technology initiatives that lead to more efficient and productive business models and operations. A major information system administered by the division is ACES, an eligibility determination and payment system that supports case management and the delivery of cash, food and medical benefits to over 800,000 people each month.

The **Division of Management and Operations Support** (DMOS) provides core business support services for ESA, including: fiscal services (budget and accounting); contracts management and monitoring support; quality control systems to measure the accuracy of eligibility decisions and benefit amounts; audit planning and support; facilities management; non-IT equipment and supply management; payroll and personnel; and management of the state's Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) system.

Chapter 2 • Our Guiding Directions

MISSION

Our mission is to provide the resources and support that help people build better lives.

VISION

Our programs and services reduce poverty and hunger, improve the lives of those who turn to us for help, and build stronger, healthier families and communities across Washington State.

To achieve this vision, we work in collaboration with many partners to offer services that help:

- Struggling families and individuals meet their basic economic needs and, to the greatest degree possible, support themselves and their children.
- Children receive the financial and medical support they need from their parents.
- People who are elderly or have a disability receive the financial, medical and other essential support they need.
- Families have access to safe, affordable child care that promotes healthy children and early learning.
- Tribal members and families meet their economic needs through government-to-government agreements and service coordination.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

We value:

- Respectful, coordinated, customer-focused service
- Teamwork
- Open, honest communication
- Staff appreciation, participation and professional development
- Diversity of cultures and thought
- Respectful work environments
- Community partnerships
- Integrity and accountability
- Fiscal responsibility
- Data-informed decisions
- Being proactive
- Continuous improvement

Chapter 3 • Statutory Authority

STATE STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR ESA PROGRAMS

Aid to Needy Families & Individuals

RCW 74.04 – General Provisions – Administration. Establishes DSHS as the single state agency to establish and administer the following public assistance programs in accordance with federal law: General Assistance, Consolidated Emergency Assistance Program, State Supplementation of SSI, Food Stamp Program (Washington’s Basic Food program), and any other public assistance program for which federal funds are provided.

RCW 74.04.500 - Food Stamp Program. Authorizes DSHS to establish a Food Stamp or benefit program under the federal Food Stamp Act of 1977, as amended.

RCW 74.08 – Eligibility Generally – Standards of Assistance. Authorizes DSHS to provide financial assistance and services in accordance with federal rules on behalf of persons who are aged, blind or disabled.

RCW 74.08A.040 – Indian Tribes - Program Access – Funding. Directs DSHS to provide tribes with ongoing, meaningful opportunities to participate in the development, oversight, and operation of the WorkFirst program, provide equitable access to WorkFirst to Indian people who are not accessing Tribal TANF programs, coordinate and cooperate with tribes with Tribal TANF programs and transfer a fair and equitable amount of State MOE funds to the eligible Indian Tribe.

RCW 74.08A.120 – Immigrants - Food Assistance. Authorizes DSHS to establish a food assistance program for legal immigrants who are ineligible for the federal Food Stamp program. Rules for the immigrant food assistance program follow the rules of the federal Food Stamp program except for provisions pertaining to immigrant status.

RCW 74.08A.130 – Immigrants - Naturalization Facilitation. Directs DSHS to identify and proactively contact legal immigrants on public assistance to facilitate their applications for naturalization, and ensure that qualified legal immigrants apply for naturalization and are referred to or offered services that will assist them in the naturalization process.

RCW 74.12 – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Authorizes DSHS to administer WorkFirst, the state’s TANF cash assistance and welfare-to-work program, including child care, in accordance with P.L. 104-193 (Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996) and federal rules on behalf of families with dependent children.

RCW 74.25A – Employment Partnership Program Act. Establishes a voluntary program using public wage subsidies and employer matching salaries to create new jobs with livable wages and promotional opportunities for the chronically unemployed and underemployed persons. The statute empowers DSHS to establish pilot projects and administer grant monies.

RCW 80.36.470 – Washington Telephone Assistance Program – Eligibility. Establishes a telephone and community voice mail assistance program for adults receiving ongoing financial, food or medical assistance from DSHS. Former participants in community voice mail programs can also qualify for telephone assistance through the program. Authorizes DSHS, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission, and Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development to adopt rules for the program.

Child Care

RCW 74.13 – Child Care Policy and Services. Authorizes DSHS to provide child care subsidies to TANF and other low-income working families, and provide services and build partnerships aimed at building a system of quality, affordable child care.

RCW 74.15 – Care of Children, Expectant Mothers, Developmentally Disabled. Provides DSHS with the authority to promote the development of a sufficient number and variety of adequate child care facilities; provide consultation to agencies caring for children in order to help them to improve their methods of care; license agencies; and assure the users of the licensed agencies that adequate minimum standards are maintained by all agencies caring for children.

Child Support Enforcement

RCW 26.09 – Dissolution of Marriage – Legal Separation. Establishes a requirement for parents to support their children.

RCW 26.18 – Child Support Enforcement. Authorizes DSHS to enforce child support obligations and supplements RCW 74.20A.

RCW 26.19 – Child Support Schedule. Establishes a child support schedule to insure that child support orders are adequate to meet a child's basic needs and to provide additional child support commensurate with the parents' income, resources, and standard of living. Apportions the child support obligation equitably between the parents.

RCW 26.21 -- Uniform Interstate Family Support Act (Formerly Uniform Reciprocal Enforcement of Support Act). Governs child support actions and case processing in cases involving parents who reside in different states (interstate cases).

RCW 26.26 – Uniform Parentage Act. Governs every determination of parentage in Washington.

RCW 26.23 – State Support Registry. Creates the Washington State Support Registry and authorizes DSHS to create a centralized registry for the recording and distribution of child support. Provides DSHS with administrative remedies for the enforcement of child support obligations.

RCW 26.25 – Cooperative Child Support Services – Indian Tribes. Encourages DSHS and Indian tribes to enter into cooperative child support agreements to provide culturally relevant child support services, consistent with state and federal laws, that are based on tribal laws and customs.

RCW 74.20 – Support of Dependent Children. Authorizes DSHS to enforce child support obligations.

RCW 74.20A – Support of Dependent Children – Alternative Method – 1971 Act.
Provides DSHS with administrative authority to establish and enforce child support obligations.

FEDERAL STATUTORY AUTHORITY FOR ESA PROGRAMS

Aid to Needy Families & Individuals

Title IV-A – Social Security Act - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Authorizes the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program and gives states wide flexibility to design TANF in ways that promote work, responsibility and self-sufficiency. TANF replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs. TANF is administered by states with federal block grant funds and matching state funds.

Title XII – Food Stamp Program. Establishes the eligibility criteria and benefit levels for the federal Food Stamp Program as created by the Food Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2002.

Title XIII – Restricting Welfare and Public Benefits for Aliens. Imposes eligibility restrictions upon qualified and non-qualified aliens to TANF, SSI, and Food Stamp benefits imposed under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, P.L. 104-193.

Title XI – Repatriate Assistance Program. Authorizes the federal Department of Health and Human Services to provide temporary assistance to U.S. citizens who have been returned from foreign countries. The law specifies the conditions under which the funds can be used.

Title XVI – Supplemental Security Income. Establishes federal funding for the Supplemental Security Income Program to provide financial assistance to aged, blind, and disabled persons with limited income and resources. Authorizes the Social Security Administration to enter into agreements with states to provide supplemental payments.

PL 96-212 – Refugee Act of 1980. Amends the Immigration and Nationality Act to provide for the admission and resettlement of refugees. The law and its amendments also authorize federal assistance to states for the resettlement of refugees.

P.L. 104-193 – Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. Gives states choices in how to structure their welfare programs. Federal funding is provided in the form of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant, and is fixed at the same level for five years. PRWORA provides new federal child care funds, reauthorizes the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG), and requires these combined funds to be administered as a unified program under the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF).

P.L. 105-33 – Balanced Budget Act (BBA) of 1997. Makes changes and implements numerous technical corrections to the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, P.L. 104-193.

PL 107-171 – Food Stamp Reauthorization Act of 2002. Reauthorizes the federal Food Stamp Program to provide for improved levels of nutrition among low-income households by supplementing households' food purchasing power. Empowers the federal Food and Nutrition Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to develop policy and administer the program through the states. Also authorizes significant changes to the Food Stamp Program (outlined in Title IV, Nutrition Programs) and provides program funding through fiscal year 2007.

7 CFR, Chapter II – Food Stamp and Food Distribution Program. Federal regulations that implement the provisions of the Food Stamp Act of 1977, P.L. 88-525.

45 CFR, Part 260 – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program (TANF). Implements the cash assistance, work participation, and data reporting requirements of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, P.L. 104-193.

47 USC Sec. 254 – Universal Service Telecommunications Act of 1996. Gives states the option to provide telephone assistance to low-income individuals and families, and provides guidelines on subsidy amounts and payments to telephone companies.

Child Care

45 CFR, Parts 98 and 99 – Child Care and Development Fund. Implements the child care provisions of the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996, and requires that child care funds be administered as a unified program, defined as the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF). Provides standards for family eligibility, co-payments, equal access to care, and the allowable use of the funds.

Child Support Enforcement

Title IV-D – Child Support Enforcement, 45 CFR 300–310. Provides federal funds to states for the purpose of enforcing the support obligations owed by noncustodial parents to their children and the spouse or former spouse with whom children are living. States also locate noncustodial parents, establish paternity, and assure support to all children, including children whose families receive TANF.

42 USC 654 (33) – Cooperative Agreements. Authorizes states to enter into cooperative agreements with Indian tribes or tribal organizations.

28 USC 1738B – Full Faith and Credit for Child Support Orders. Requires courts of all U.S. territories, states and tribes to accord full faith and credit to a child support order issued by another state or tribe that properly exercised jurisdiction over the parties and the subject matter.

Chapter 4 • Environmental Context

APPRAISAL OF EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

TANF Reauthorization

- TANF has been operating on short-term extensions since 2002. For the TANF program to continue, federal legislation must be approved that reauthorizes the program and federal funding. Congress has been working to reauthorize TANF for the last several years, but it has been delayed due to significant differences among lawmakers on program design and funding levels. The outcome of the reauthorization debate is of great importance to states, and will largely determine the extent to which Washington State can continue its success in moving families from welfare to work.

Children in Poverty

- According to the Kids Count 2004 State of Washington's Children report, nearly 30% of Washington State's children lived in a single-parent home in 2001, up from 26% in 1996. Approximately 13% of Washington's 1.5 million children live in poverty, and the children of single-parent households are much more likely to be poor than are children in two-parent households.

Food Insecurity

- In the past, extensive federal regulations and restrictions greatly hindered participation in the Food Stamp program. Recent reforms at the federal level — most notably, the 2002 Farm Bill — have given states flexibility to make a number of changes to improve access to benefits that are an essential economic supplement to low-income individuals and families. States are encouraging Congress to build on these improvements through further reforms and law changes.

Kinship Care

- According to 2000 Census Bureau data, there are an estimated 32,000 children in Washington State (about 2%, or one in 50 children) who are living in households headed by their grandparents or other relatives. These are children whose parents cannot or will not care for them for a number of reasons, including illness, substance abuse, illness, abuse and neglect, economic hardship, incarceration, divorce, and domestic violence.

General Assistance

- Applications for General Assistance (GA) and the state's GA caseload have steadily increased over time. This growth may be attributed to a combination of economic conditions and high unemployment, population growth and aging, increased homelessness, cuts in other programs and services for the indigent at the state, city, and county levels, and restrictions on federal aid for some legal immigrant populations.

Health Care Reductions

- Since the early 1990s, Washington has been a leader among states in efforts to expand health insurance coverage. The state extended Medicaid coverage to children to 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL) and enacted the Basic Health Plan, a state-funded program, to cover low-income working families up to 200% FPL. In the last several years, however,

the state's poor economic performance and significant increases in health care costs due to rising caseloads have led to sharp reductions in health care spending. These reductions included substantial cuts in both the Basic Health Plan and Medicaid, and the elimination of the state-funded medically indigent program. Major changes to Medicaid include an increase in the frequency of eligibility determinations (from 12 to six months), tighter verification requirements, and premiums on Children's Medical coverage.

Aid for Legal Immigrants

- The 1996 welfare reform law dramatically limited legal immigrants' access to federal aid, including Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Supplemental Security Income, Food Stamps, and Medicaid.

While eligibility for certain federal benefits has been restored for some populations (for example, many legal immigrants who had previously lost eligibility can now qualify for food stamps under the 2002 Farm Bill), whether to make additional restorations may be an issue during TANF Reauthorization. Such restoration would relieve the financial strain on states like Washington that have chosen to provide safety net services at state cost to low-income legal immigrants and refugees.

Tribal Assistance Programs

- The 1996 welfare reform law authorized federally recognized Indian tribes and tribal organizations the opportunity to operate their own TANF and/or child support programs. Six tribes and one tribal consortium in Washington State now operate TANF programs, and negotiation continues with a number of other tribes. Three tribes in Washington State operate child support programs, and with the March 2004 finalization of the Federal Rule on Tribal Child Support Enforcement Programs, several other tribes plan to operate their own child support programs.

TRENDS IN CUSTOMER CHARACTERISTICS

TANF Child-Only Cases

- States are seeing a growing proportion of their TANF caseloads represented by "child-only" cases. These cases, in which the only recipients of welfare benefits are children, now make up about one-third of the welfare caseload nationwide. This growth can be attributed in part to the overall decline in the TANF caseload as more families leave the program. But the number of child-only TANF cases is also increasing. In Washington State, child-only cases rose from 18.5% of the caseload (15,540 cases) in SFY 98 to about 36% of the caseload (almost 21,000 cases) in SFY 2004. The majority of these child-only cases (91%) have a relative or kinship caregiver (45%), a disabled parent who is receiving federal disability benefits (23%), or an undocumented immigrant parent who is not eligible for assistance (23%).

Immigrant Population

- The demographics of the refugee and immigrant populations in Washington State are changing, with increasing numbers arriving from former Soviet republics. For example, over 47% of the people receiving Refugee Cash Assistance in SFY 2003 came from Eastern Europe, compared to 13% from East Africa and 3% from Southeast Asia. More than 11% of the adults receiving TANF benefits are legal immigrants. Many of these immigrants have low levels of education and English proficiency, which present significant barriers to self-sufficiency.

Self-Sufficiency & Child Well-being

- With the advent of welfare reform and its self-sufficiency focus, there has been growing recognition of the multiple, complex barriers to employment facing many low-income families, and the need for a more comprehensive and integrated system of aid and supports for these families. Barriers like substance abuse, family violence, limited education and mental health issues are also barriers to effective parenting.

Not surprisingly then, families served by the welfare, child welfare, and other human service programs and systems often overlap. For example, in Washington State, about 20% of the children who were on TANF in May 2003 have been involved at some point with the child welfare system.

Better coordination between programs that provide basic income and other vital economic supports (such as TANF, Basic Food and child support) and programs that provide more specialized services and supports (such as child abuse prevention and early intervention, and services for older relative caregivers) is key to helping families climb out of poverty and improving the well-being of low-income children.

Working Connections Child Care Usage

- The percent of children served by Working Connections Child Care that are cared for in a setting exempt from licensing regulations has declined steadily, from a high of 39% in SFY 1999 to 23% in SFY 2004. Center care is the most commonly used type of care for children in the program, being used by 47% of children in SFY 2004.

KEY CHALLENGES & OPPORTUNITIES

- **Working in partnership to redesign our service delivery systems and business operations in cost-effective ways** that support the delivery of integrated and coordinated services to people in need with multiple issues.
- **Realigning programs and services that serve vulnerable families** (like TANF, Basic Food, Medicaid and child welfare) to the greatest extent possible – to make it easier for families to access the help they need, reduce workload, and ease administrative burdens.
- **Helping families access affordable, quality child care.** In the past two years, budget pressures have required the state to lower the income eligibility for child care subsidies from 225% of the federal poverty level to 200%, and increase child care co-payments by \$5 a month. However, low-income families in Washington continue to have access to affordable child care without enrollment caps or waiting lists.
- **Ensuring adequate staffing and resources for child care licensing and enforcement.** While the number of licensed family child care homes has declined 15% over the last six years (from 7,665 homes in 1998 to 6,520 homes in 2004), the number of licensed child care centers has increased 13% (from 1,862 centers to 2,111). The Department currently has 91 child care licensors who are responsible for inspecting these homes and centers and investigating complaints involving these facilities.
- **Managing heavier workload associated with Medicaid changes.** Major changes in the state's Medicaid program have significantly increased the time that workers spend determining eligibility and managing cases.
- **Strengthening program integrity.** A key challenge facing Economic Services is improving payment accuracy for TANF, Basic Food, Medicaid and child care subsidy

programs without compromising service quality in the face of growing caseloads and increased workload.

- **Improving the economic status of poor children through child support.** For poor families, child support is a significant source of income. In SFY 2004, 69.5% of Washington State's child support caseload were families that were on welfare (15.7%) or have left welfare (53.8%). A struggling economy with wage downturns and high unemployment hamper efforts to collect child support and reduce child poverty. Research shows that many non-custodial parents of poor children are poor themselves and very limited in their ability to provide support for their children.¹

Another major challenge is recouping some of the state's Medicaid costs for children in single-parent families through improved medical support enforcement.

¹ According to a September 2000 report, *A Look at Poor Dads Who Don't Pay Child Support*, by the Urban Institute, a 1997 National Survey of America's Families found that 2.6 million non-custodial fathers in the U.S. have family incomes below the poverty line and that many face multiple employment barriers, such as a criminal record, lack of a high school education, relatively little work experience, substance abuse issues, and poor health.

ACTIVITY LINKS TO MAJOR PARTNERS

Economic Services is involved with a number of government agencies (state, federal and local), Tribes, and community groups in a variety of partnerships to improve the delivery of human services to individuals and families in need, and to leverage community resources and connections to great benefit. Below are examples of the innovative partnerships ESA is involved in.

Working Together to Strengthen Families, Neighborhoods & Communities

ESA is working with a number of other Administrations to provide coordinated client services within DSHS and with community partners through a multi-disciplinary service delivery and case-staffing model. Expected outcomes of the Coordinated Services Initiative (CSI) include increased collaboration, reduction in duplicated services, increased knowledge of each other's programs and services, better involvement of the client in developing a coordinated action plan, and better customer service. CSI is currently available in Community Services Offices across the state.

An example of CSI at the local level: The Clarkston Community Services Office has partnered with a number of community-based agencies and organizations – including the local YWCA, Walla Walla Community College, Rogers Counseling Center, and Asotin County Health District – to provide on-site life skills workshops and literacy and substance abuse assessments for clients. The Clarkston CSO also partnered with Valley Transit and the Asotin County Housing Authority to develop a fixed route system that provides many clients with no-cost transportation to work, child care facilities, schools, and medical appointments.

CSI builds off ESA's continued success in working with the Medical Assistance Administration and Division of Alcohol and Substance Abuse to ensure struggling WorkFirst families have easy access to family planning and substance abuse services. There are family planning nurses, family planning clinics, and chemical dependency counselors located onsite in many local Community Services Offices across the state.

Families and Communities Together (FACT)

FACT is a major DSHS integration initiative being piloted in Bellingham and Spokane that focuses on developing a comprehensive community network and seamless system of supports and resources for needy families and children. ESA is working closely with the Children's Administration and other parts of DSHS to build partnerships and strong multilateral relationships with each other, non-profits, local service providers and local governments that will result in better outcomes for children, families and communities.

Help for Working Families Initiative in Seattle

ESA is working closely with the City of Seattle Human Services Department, Public Health, and local community-based organizations to make it easier for low-income people in Seattle to apply for and receive these public benefits:

- Child care subsidy programs, available through the state and City of Seattle
- Energy and utility assistance programs, available through the City of Seattle
- Basic Food Program, available through the state
- Children's medical programs and Basic Health Plan, available through the state
- Federal Earned Income Tax Credit

Under this initiative, anyone calling or seeking help from the Seattle Public Health Department, City of Seattle's Human Services, and a number of community-based agencies in King County can apply for the five programs at one time. Currently under development for implementation in 2004 as part of this initiative is an integrated web-based application system that would allow needy families and individuals in Seattle to apply for all these services and benefits through a single application.

White Center Boulevard Park Project: Making Connections Initiative

ESA is also working with other parts of DSHS and a host of government, educational institutions, business, and community agencies on this major service integration and collaboration project sponsored by the Annie E. Casey Foundation that is based in White Center, an ethnically diverse neighborhood in an unincorporated area of south King County. The goal of the project is to improve outcomes for the families and children who live in this isolated and economically depressed community. A Multi-Family Services Center in the area opened in October 2004.

Collaboration with Tribes

Contracts & Cooperative Agreements. For the delivery of WorkFirst services, the Department and three other state agencies (Employment Security Department; Department of Community, Trade and Economic Development; and State Board for Community and Technical Colleges) enter into agreements with a diverse base of contractors, including community-based organizations, local governments, and tribes.

Four tribes are currently contracting with the Department under this collaborative process: Upper Skagit, Nooksack, Lummi and Tulalip Tribes.

The Division of Child Support has negotiated and established formal cooperative agreements with four tribes that support the provision of culturally appropriate services for the establishment and enforcement of child support obligations involving Indian families. Agreements have been established with these four tribes: Nisqually Tribe, Nez Perce' Tribe, Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation, and Kalispel Tribe.

Tribal child Support Programs. The Division of Child Support works collaboratively with tribes in Washington State who wish to operate their own Tribal Child Support programs. To date, the Port Gamble S'Klallam Tribe, the Puyallup and the Lummi Nation are three of the nine Tribal programs in the nation. The Division continues to work with a number of other tribes that are actively pursuing Tribal Child Support Plans.

Tribal TANF. Local Community Services Offices (CSOs) work collaboratively with the six tribes (Colville, Port Gamble, Lower Elwha, Quileute, Quinault Nation, and Spokane Tribes) that are operating their own Tribal TANF programs in Washington State to ensure eligible tribal members have access to food, medical, and child care assistance and other services available through the CSOs. In Spokane, a financial worker from the Spokane Southwest CSO is outstationed with the Spokane Tribal TANF program.

Collaboration with the Office of the Superintendent for Public Instruction (OSPI)

The Division of Child Care and Early Learning (DCCEL) and Division of Employment and Assistance Programs (DEAP) continues to work collaboratively with OSPI to promote the health and well-being of children through the provision of quality early learning/school readiness services, nutrition services and nutritious meals for children in public and private schools and child care facilities across the state.

STAKEHOLDER INPUT

Four major groups of individuals were involved in the development of the ESA Strategic Plan for 2006 – 2011:

- ESA employees across the state
- Economic Services Advisory Committee, a group broadly representative of the consumers we serve, including children's advocates, advocates for the homeless, legal services, private sector enterprise, and community colleges
- ESMART, an employee advisory committee that reviews major policy, business, and operational proposals for the administration and provides executive leadership with recommendations
- ESA Leadership Team

To more actively engage field staff in the future of ESA, the leadership team in each region and select representative staff participated in interactive discussions on client trends, staff needs, stakeholder interests and projected fiscal and economic trends. Staff helped establish organizational priorities in these key areas: customer outcomes and service quality; staff development and support; stakeholders and partnerships (service integration); and organizational stewardship and accountability. This enhanced level of communication and field participation will be instrumental in implementing successful change in ESA.

Following an analysis of the organization's strengths and weaknesses, Economic Services also sought input from the administration's Economic Services Advisory Committee (ESAC). The issues and priorities identified by ESAC were consistent with those received from management and staff and helped clearly establish direction for the organization over the coming years.

Chapter 5 • Goals, Objectives, Strategies & Performance Measures



Introduction

Within the context and framework of the DSHS Mission, ESA program mandates and requirements, and the critical issues, challenges and opportunities facing human services now and in the years ahead, the Economic Services Administration has established eight **Strategic Direction Goals** to guide future decisions and actions.

- ESA provides services and supports that assist people in avoiding or reducing poverty and help them reach their highest possible level of self-sufficiency
- ESA coordinates and integrates services to leverage and align resources to better serve families
- ESA ensures families and individuals receive quality services and are treated with dignity and respect
- ESA is a fiscally responsible organization that provides quality stewardship of public funds in support of our mission
- ESA has the infrastructure and systems to help people do their jobs as effectively as possible in support of the organization's mission
- ESA manages and maintains an effective workforce
- ESA has business practices to protect the environment and encourage efficient use of resources

IMPROVE ACCESS TO SERVICES AND OUTCOMES FOR INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES – PUBLIC VALUE

Goal A: ESA provides services and supports that assist people in avoiding or reducing poverty and help them reach their highest possible level of self-sufficiency

Objectives

- Minimize barriers and quickly connect individuals to the services and benefits they need to make successful transitions from welfare to economic self-sufficiency and/or to retain self-sufficiency
- Reduce the prevalence of food insecurity and hunger in Washington State
- Enhance economic security of children through child support enforcement efforts
- Provide families with access to quality, affordable, and culturally appropriate child care services that promote healthy child development

Key Strategies

- Improve accessibility to programs and services
- Improve internal and external communication
- Simplify eligibility and application processes
- Actively market the Basic Food and other programs
- Develop service partnerships with community-based agencies and other organizations
- Improve the exchange of information between the Community Services Division and Division of Child Support
- Actively market the child support program to the public and our partners
- Focus staff and program activities on the core child support mission
- Increase communication with child care providers regarding subsidies, roles, and processes
- Increase monitoring of licensed child care providers
- Increase the number of licensed child care providers
- Develop and implement a consumer communication plan for child care

This goal contributes to the following Balanced Scorecard perspectives

Themes: ☒Public ☒Customer ☒Financial ☐Internal ☐Learning & Growth

Goal B: ESA coordinates and integrates services to leverage and align resources to better serve families

Objectives

- Partner within and outside of ESA to coordinate and integrate services to more effectively serve clients

Key Strategies

- Increase knowledge across ESA of the work functions of each ESA Division
- Encourage one-stop concepts that provide a range of similar or related services directly and/or through planned affiliated sites
- Develop and communicate the vision, purpose, and goals of service integration
- Develop and enhance community partnerships

This goal contributes to the following Balanced Scorecard perspectives

Themes: ☒Public ☒Customer ☒Financial ☐Internal ☐Learning & Growth

IMPROVE QUALITY OF SERVICES FOR FAMILIES AND INDIVIDUALS – CUSTOMER SERVICE

Goal C: ESA ensures families and individuals receive quality services and are treated with dignity and respect

Objectives

- Provide responsive, accurate, and timely delivery of services to eligible families and individuals who apply for benefits
- Encourage community and consumer input in policy development and service delivery
- Provide culturally competent services to families and individuals
- Work with Tribes on a government-to-government basis to ensure services are provided in ways that best meet the needs of Native Americans

Key Strategies

- Provide more and better information to help our clients become informed consumers
- Provide staff training on how to achieve accurate and timely benefit issuance
- Provide training to support and encourage state and local process improvements that enhance the accurate and timely delivery of services
- Develop and implement state and local strategies to improve community relationships
- Develop and implement a plan to engage consumers in policy development and service delivery improvements
- Develop an understanding of cultural competency and how it relates to the work of ESA
- Develop a plan to implement cultural competency into policy development and service delivery
- Recruit and support culturally competent, diverse staff and providers
- Develop expert, knowledgeable trainers to provide comprehensive training on cultural competency and related issues
- Improve our capacity to communicate with clients and providers in their primary language
- Ensure access to culturally competent providers

- Provide enhanced staff training regarding Administrative Policy 7.01, working government-to-government, the Centennial Accord, and related issues
- Encourage contact between the Tribes and ESA at all levels of the organization

This goal contributes to the following Balanced Scorecard perspectives

Themes: ☒Public ☒Customer ☐Financial ☒Internal ☐Learning & Growth

IMPROVE PROGRAM INTEGRITY AND FINANCIAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT – INTERNAL PROCESS

Goal D: ESA is a fiscally responsible organization that provides quality stewardship of public funds in support of our mission

Objectives

- Ensure that vendor/provider contracts, billing, and payments are legally sound, accurate, and timely
- Provide timely and accurate issuance of benefits to individuals and families
- Maximize federal funding

Key Strategies

- Establish and implement standards for development and monitoring of contracts
- Develop and implement a post-billing/payment review process
- Actively pursue expansion of Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) and/or a strategy to provide a single benefit card to clients
- Develop and implement e-Child Care
- Maximize federal child support incentives
- Provide accurate TANF and child care benefits
- Regularly review and update the cost allocation methodology/plan

This goal contributes to the following Balanced Scorecard perspectives

Themes: ☒Public ☒Customer ☒Financial ☒Internal ☐Learning & Growth

IMPROVE INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT SYSTEMS – INTERNAL PROCESS

Goal E: ESA has the infrastructure, information, and systems to help people do their jobs as effectively as possible in support of the organization's mission

Objectives

- Ensure that staff has the equipment, business system applications, information, and technology necessary to do their jobs
- Ensure that staff has a safe and appropriate work environment

- Encourage and support collaborative planning, decision-making, and implementation of major changes through the use of project management, inclusive change management, and other coordinated strategies

Key Strategies

- Improve access to information
- Improve communication between systems
- Improve usability and work flow of systems
- Develop and implement an administration-level infrastructure plan
- Automate manual processes
- Encourage respectful work environments free of hostility by providing updated, on-going workplace safety training and periodic training on conflict resolution and stress management
- Ensure emergency plans are reviewed and discussed annually and provide adequate emergency supplies and training for all staff
- Ensure systems, training, and other materials are available prior to implementation of change in policy
- Build our capacity in project and change management
- Ensure all appropriate divisions and field staff are included when planning change

This goal contributes to the following Balanced Scorecard perspectives

Themes: ☒Public ☒Customer ☐Financial ☐Internal ☒Learning & Growth

IMPROVE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND DIVERSITY – LEARNING AND GROWTH

Goal F: ESA manages and maintains an effective workforce

Objectives

- Recruit and retain competent employees
- Improve access, relevance, and quality of training and professional development
- Implement a succession plan for ESA

Key Strategies

- Train managers on effective recruiting, interviewing, and hiring
- Develop an open-competitive, objective hiring protocol
- Develop and implement a strategy to recruit a more diverse workforce
- Encourage both formal and informal recognition
- Ensure management behavior reflects the value of employees

- Ensure regular, timely performance feedback
- Develop individual training plans for staff and provide adequate funding to support
- Encourage and support participation in the ESA mentoring program
- Develop a career path and core competencies for each job classification
- Implement the ESA training plan

This goal contributes to the following Balanced Scorecard perspectives
 Themes: ☒Public ☒Customer ☐Financial ☐Internal ☒Learning & Growth

IMPROVE ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY – INTERNAL PROCESS

Goal G: ESA has business practices to protect the environment and encourage efficient use of resources

Objectives

- Reduce, reuse, and recycle
- Expand use of the Commute Trip Reduction Program

Key Strategies

- Expand recycling for non-paper products
- Expand ability to support duplex printing
- Implement document imaging for administrative functions
- Provide education/information and encourage the use of Commute Trip Reduction Program

This goal contributes to the following Balanced Scorecard perspectives
 Themes: ☒Public ☒Customer ☐Financial ☒Internal ☐Learning & Growth

Chapter 6 • Organization Assessment Summary

PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

Customer Service

The 2003 annual survey of DSHS clients conducted by Washington State University found significant improvements in ESA staff performance in three key areas of service:

- In the *Programs Help Clients* category, 95% of the ESA clients surveyed said the programs and services they received helped them, up from 88% in 2001.
- In the *Quality of Service* category, 84% of the ESA clients surveyed felt that ESA does good work, up from 69% in 2001. 66% said it was easy to get service, compared to 52% in 2001.
- In the *Timeliness of Service* category, 69% said they got their services as quickly as they needed, up from 58% in 2001. 71% said that ESA staff explained things clearly, compared to 67% in 2001.

Child Support

Total Title IV-D child support collections increased from \$605.2 million in SFY 01 to \$633.6 million in SFY 04. DCS earns more than 12 percent of its funding through its performance in five areas, but the federal match triples it to over 37 percent. In FFY 02, the Division of Child Support earned nearly \$15.2 million in federal incentives for its performance in these five areas: paternity establishment percentage (100%); support order establishment rate (91%); current support collection rate (64%); arrearage collection rate (68.3%); and cost-effectiveness ratio (for every dollar spent by the Division, \$4.95 was received in child support payments). FFY 03 incentives have not yet been announced.

Basic Food

According to the federal Food and Nutrition Services' analysis of FFY 2002 data on food stamp payment accuracy among states, Washington completed its 4th straight year above the national average, with an accuracy rate of 91.8%. The FFY 2002 national average is 91.7%.

The number of people being helped through Washington's Basic Food program has increased 34% in the last three years – from 307,000 in August 2000 to over 423,000 Washingtonians today.

Washington's Basic Food program also has the distinction of having the largest outreach effort in the nation, measured by the number of agencies (51 statewide) ESA contracts with to provide food stamp outreach, and the number of people contacted (nearly 50,000 people in SFY 03).

Child Care Access

Washington's welfare reform success in moving people from welfare into jobs and providing low-income families with the vital supports they need to succeed in the workforce continues to win Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) bonus money from the federal government.

Last year, the federal Department of Health and Human Services awarded over \$729,000 in high performance federal funds to Washington for its top ranking among states for subsidized child care access and affordability in FFY 2001.

Since its inception in 1997, WorkFirst has earned nearly \$24 million in high performance bonuses from the federal government for its success and effectiveness in helping families on welfare get and keep a job, and helping them increase their earnings

FINANCIAL HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Successive reductions to ESA's administrative budget in the last two budget cycles have resulted in significant staff reductions and fewer local Community Services Offices.

While Washington State appears to be coming out of a long recession, the slow recovery and continued budget constraints are affecting many residents. The state's stagnant economy and high unemployment will continue to strain ESA programs and services, including TANF, Basic Food, General Assistance, and child support collections.

Changes in federal requirements for TANF and TANF block grant funding levels now being considered by Congress could have significant policy and budget ramifications for states. Federal funding for child care is a major issue in the reauthorization debate. It is important that child care is financed at a level that allows the state to maintain its current subsidy program and meet the higher costs associated with increased work requirements that are likely.

High performing states in five key support enforcement areas qualify for federal performance incentives that are federally matched at the same rate (66%) as state dollars. Washington's child support program earned more than \$16.4 million in incentives in FFY 01. In SFY 03, 80% of Washington's child support program was federally funded. Federal performance incentives accounted for 40% of the child support budget.

Due to a change in the federal allocation formula, federal funding for FFY 2004 for employment and social services to refugees receiving TANF or Refugee Assistance in Washington State was \$1 million less than FFY 2003 funding. Reductions in federal funding shift costs to states and localities and may require changes in the scope and level of services available through these programs.

Caseload growth and participation by high-cost telephone companies have significantly increased expenditures for the Washington Telephone Assistance Program in the last three years. WTAP is funded solely by a 13-cent excise tax on every switched (wire) telephone line in the state. To ensure a balanced budget, changes were made in the last year in the client co-payment amount and telephone company reimbursement levels. Other changes may be needed to ensure the program's fiscal integrity.

COST REDUCTION STRATEGIES

To improve service quality and mitigate the effects of budget reductions, ESA developed and implemented these technology-driven business models:

- **A Child Support Internet Payment System** that enhances customer access and allows faster and more convenient payment and processing of child support. As of June 2004, more than 53,200 payments totaling more than \$25.6 million have been electronically processed through the site.
- **A Child Support Smart Card** that custodial parents can use to access their child support payments. Child support payments are electronically sent to card accounts, saving time and money in processing. Participating parents can use these stored value cards at any point of sale location, including ATMs and any merchant that accepts VISA. There were over 16,400 card users as of June 2004.
- **The Washington Combined Application Program (WASHCAP)**, the first automated system and centralized service center in the nation that interfaces with the Social Security Administration and allows the immediate authorization and issuance of food assistance to low-income elderly or disabled people who are approved for federal SSI disability benefits.
- **Statewide use of imaging technology** for better customer service and more efficient document processing.
- **The Online CSO**, the nation's first Internet application for public assistance (including food and medical assistance and child care).

AGENCY SELF-ASSESSMENT

ESA'S e-SMART committee, a group comprised of a mix of all major job classes in ESA, performed the assessment. The committee is typically used to vet high-level projects and improvement opportunities for ESA.

The assessment was scored through a facilitated method. Each committee member shared their own scoring for each item, then a facilitated discussion followed. Committee members shared a candid and frank exchange on the reasoning behind the scoring, spending extra time on issues that showed a wide diversity of scoring and passionate, contrasting positions.

The scoring was averaged for a final tally.

Strengths

1. Strategy Development (4.3)
2. Senior Leadership Direction (4.0)
3. Customer Relationships (4.1)

Opportunities

1. Plan Deployment (2.2)
2. Process Performance (1.4)
3. Employee Training and Development (1.9)

The committee praised the organization for strategic intent but marked it lower on deployment. Areas to improve include: better aligning measures with goals and stated

mission; improving change management coordination between policy, systems and training; reducing the effect of “fire drills” derailing strategic commitments; and improving employee development and recognition in alignment with desired strategic and operational outcomes.

ESA has launched an aggressive strategic and performance planning effort to develop a single source of information for organizational priorities, key performance measures (outcomes and critical operational outputs) and tracking of priority initiatives. We are also instituting frequent expanded management team meetings to bring together field and state office leaders to collectively review performance, plan deployment and make recommendations for adjustments and new initiatives.

In addition, the administration has developed a “Change Management” advisory committee made up of staff from policy, Information Technology, operations, staff development, and quality assurance to provide recommendations and oversight on implementing processes that improve the early and frequent collaboration between departments and divisions in operationalizing new policy and major procedural changes.

ESA has finished a Training Strategic Plan and is currently implementing key elements of the plan. This includes empowering a statewide training advisory committee to design and implement statewide curriculum to improve the quality and professionalism of the training experience while also improving the consistency of policy implementation and outcomes for clients.



This document is also available electronically at:

www1.dshs.wa.gov/strategic

Persons with disabilities may request a hard copy by contacting DSHS at: 360.902.7800, or TTY: 800.422.7930.

Questions about the strategic planning process may be directed to DSHS Constituent Services at: 1.800.737.0617.

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